

A short explanation of Republicans, Democrats, and their differences

(posted by Psi_Phi_Org on <http://askville.amazon.com>)

Both parties are aggregations of special interest groups, as is any party: the groups agree to put their differences behind them to achieve their common goals.

Amusingly, they're not always the same common goals. Many Jews are Democrats because they support the Democrats' public-welfare goals, as do the African-Americans, but those two groups have substantial friction between them.

The parties' coalitions are always shifting. The South used to vote solidly Democratic in the 19th century because the Democrats were on their side, supporting the poor Southern farmers. But as that shifted in the 20th century to an urban racial issue for the Democrats, and southern Democrats realized that they preferred lower taxes to government control, they shifted to the Republican party.

So many of the current coalitions are largely historical, and may change in the near future. For example, Catholics support the Democrats for their pro-union stance (from a time when many poor and working-class Irish Catholics wanted to join unions) but the Democrat's pro-abortion stance is driving them away. Conversely, a number of social liberals¹, who joined the Republicans for their fiscal conservatism², are defecting because they believe that the religious elements of the Republican party have too much power and are focusing it exclusively on socially conservative goals without bringing fiscal discipline.

Broadly speaking, the Republican party stands for:

- Minimizing the federal government (e.g. lower taxes).
- Allowing the free market to allow people to make choices, and get rich or fail on their own terms
- Pro individual rights, such as gun control
- A Christian nation, which means prayer in schools, no gay marriages, no abortions, and none of the things that are tantamount to abortion, like stem cells
- Color-blindness on racial issues
- Ending crime by punishing criminals and supporting victims

And the Democrats, by contrast:

- Substantial government regulation, especially on environmental and educational issues (e.g. higher taxes)
- Wealth redistribution from rich business owners to the poor
- Protecting people from themselves and each other e.g. by limiting or banning gun ownership
- A secular nation
- Affirmative action to redress the wrongs caused by racism
- Ending crime by alleviating the causes (poverty, mental illness)

1 **social liberals** believe that the government should not interfere with personal decisions (e. g. religion, abortion, gay marriage, etc.) - *opposite*: **social conservatives**

2 **fiscal conservatives** believe that the government should not interfere with the 'free market' (e. g. less taxes) and should therefore spend as little money as possible -> **fiscal discipline**

To generalize even more broadly, some would say that the Democrats believe in the power of government to help people, and the Republicans believe in individual freedom but with stern punishments for lawbreakers. The Mommy Party and the Daddy Party, perhaps.

45 But I'm afraid that this is going far, far, far too far, and both groups regularly violate their principle in pursuit of some other goal. For example, Republicans are all for the rights of states over the federal government, until some state decides it want to allow gays to marry each other. And Democrats are all for restricting the rights of businesses, except for the personal-injury
50 lawyers.

This are broad generalizations, and not all Democrats believe all of the Democratic issues or vice versa. In fact, when it comes to the politicians, many would say that being a Democrat means primarily not being a Republican, and vice versa.

55 Republicans are deeply concerned that Democrats stand for interfering with the capitalist urge to innovate and expand the economy, and tear down the traditional family structures that have served the country well for centuries. Democrats are concerned that Republicans want to allow those with money to arrogate the law to themselves, trampling on both individuals and the environment, and to impose a Puritan sexual morality on everybody. Republicans think
60 Democrats are naive fools; Democrats think Republicans are mean.

Both sides are convinced that the other is deeply hypocritical, willing to violate its stated principles at the drop of a hat filled with money.

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